wheat in different States of the country to achieve the target of procurement;

(b) if so, the quantum of wheat to be procured from each of wheat growing State; and

(c) by when this procurement will be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The estimates of procurement given by Food Secretaries of wheat growing States alongwith the date of its commencement is as under:—

State	Estimated Procurement (in lakh tonnes)	Date of commencement of Procurement
Punjab	85	1.4.2006
Haryana	42	1.4.2006
Uttar Pradesh	25	1.4.2006
Madhya Pradesh	5	21.3.2006
Uttaranchal	1	1.4.2006
Rajasthan	2	20.3.2006
Bihar	2	15.4.2006
Others*	0.07	
Total	162.07	

"includes Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand and Himachal Pradesh

Extinction of vultures due to bacteria

†1991. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of birds in all major cities has considerably declined as these cities are turning into concrete jungles;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether it is also a fact that population of vultures in the country is declining sharply due to a bacteria called 'Harnolytic-a-Kbff and these vultures are on the verge of extinction;

(d) if so, whether Government would contemplate any effective steps to save vultures from extinction; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No Sir. No such reports have been received.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No Sir. The decline in vultures has been attributed mainly to the veterinary drug diclofenac present in the carcasses of cattle on which the vultures feed. Out of the vultures found in India, the decline in population of three species namely Slender Billed, White Backed and Long Billed is a cause of global concern.

(d) and (e) The issue of decline in population of vultures in the country was discussed in the meeting of the National Board for Wildlife in 2005 wherein it was recommended that the veterinary drug diclofenac should be banned. Accordingly the Ministry of Environment and Forests has taken up the matter with the concerned Ministries and organizations to place a ban on diclofenac. Vulture conservation and breeding centres have been established at Pinjore, Haryana and Buxa, West Bengal in 2001 and 2005 respectively. Education and awareness campaigns about the important role of vultures in our ecosystem have been strengthened.

Death of birds

1992. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR:
SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than 300 birds belonging to the Okhla Bird Sanctuary were found floating dead in the River Yamuna recently;

(b) whether it is a fact that most of the dead birds are Shoveller ducks which migrate from Russia and Northern China;